

FRONT LINES

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An indigenous group is protecting the Panama Canal through ecotourism. See pages 8-9.



Photo by Fernando Alvarez, USAID

A new generation of the environmentally conscious is taking hold in Ella Drua, Panama.

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As Pakistan's Waters Recede, USAID Commitment Grows

By Zack Taylor



Photo by Asif Hasan, AFP

A Pakistani rescue worker pulls a flood victim onto a boat in Shehdadkot, Sindh province, Aug. 24.

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan

Six million people remain directly affected by Pakistan's floodwaters, and nearly all of them are in need of humanitarian assistance. As the waters begin to recede after submerging more than one-fifth of the nation, assistance from USAID and sister government agencies is rising.

At press time, the United States had provided \$258 million in flood assistance, including \$50 million in funding from the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan, or Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill. This latest funding will support early recovery programs such as rehabilitation of community infrastructure and livelihood restoration activities.

Total aid to the country from all sources—either delivered or promised—has topped \$1 billion, but officials stress that more will be needed for both immediate relief and long-term recovery. And the relief phase was still ongoing as the monsoon rains continued to fall into early September.

USAID has provided more than 5.4 million liters of clean water via 13 mobile water treatment plants, 10 water storage bladders, and 32,000 water containers to people living in camps for the displaced.

USAID has delivered more than 2.58 million pounds of relief supplies, including 5,063 rolls of plastic sheeting used for shelter, and 17,000 blankets. The Agency has also provided 96 concrete-cutting saw kits for rescue teams, which have evacuated more than 10,000 people trapped by the water, and 58 Zodiac rescue boats.

So far, despite fears, a wave of disease has not materialized, but officials remain vigilant. USAID has funded more than 20 diarrhea treatment centers in Pakistan, with new sites opening daily, especially in the southern provinces that have experienced the

Shah Visits Flood-Ravaged Areas

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan

In his third visit to Pakistan in five months, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah said in late August that U.S. development priorities here must change in response to the flood disaster that began one month earlier. He also announced \$50 million in new

flood relief assistance to support immediate short- and medium-term flood recovery, bringing the U.S. commitment to \$258 million as of Sept. 8.

Visiting flood-affected areas on a C-130 airplane packed with plastic sheeting

see **ISLAMABAD** on page 12 ►

Innovation in Spotlight at UN General Assembly

By Angela Rucker

Scientific and technological breakthroughs will be the next "smart power" weapon in international foreign aid if U.S. development officials have anything to say about it.

STI—shorthand for science, technology, and innovation—is one of several subjects that USAID will highlight at this month's opening of the 65th United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The annual gathering, which brings together leaders from both

the developed and developing world at U.N. headquarters, will also include high-profile events on nutrition, partnerships, HIV/AIDS, and women and girls, as well as a call from senior officials to accelerate work on the Millennium Development Goals to improve conditions in developing countries.

Alongside more traditional efforts, science and technology increasingly is being pushed as a

see **SCIENCE** on page 5 ►

see **PAKISTAN** on page 12 ►



Photo by Thony Belzair, AFP

Workers rebuild College St. Jean l'Evangeliste in Port-au-Prince April 5. Haitian buildings lack standards to provide access to people with disabilities, who numbered about 800,000 before the Jan. 12 quake. Since the quake, USAID has designated \$10 million for disability-related support for the island nation. See story, page 5.

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Kathy Calvin

Interview with Kathy Calvin, CEO, UN Foundation

Kathy Calvin, the chief executive officer of the United Nations Foundation, recently discussed the foundation's priorities and partnerships with FrontLines Managing Editor Kelly Ramundo.

Q: What would you say is your biggest challenge as CEO of the U.N. Foundation?

CALVIN: Well, I'd say the biggest challenge is our continuing effort to create a creative and innovative platform for others to engage with the U.N. There are so many big issues and opportunities.

The challenge is always to figure out the issues that will allow the most number of people, organizations, companies, and governments to work together to solve big problems. We are constantly evaluating where the U.N. most needs help, and where we can really make an achievable impact on the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals].

So over the past few years, we've put our energies and efforts into things like a campaign to increase the number of bed nets that are sent to Africa to control malaria.

We've just launched a campaign to support adolescent girls around the world to ensure that they stay in school longer, delay marriage, delay childbirth, and have a chance to build themselves into productive, economic citizens.

And we are also in the process of launching a campaign to increase scale of access to clean cook stoves, using technologies that would reduce harmful black soot emissions, making it less dangerous for women to have to go out and collect firewood for stoves and

reduce emissions on the climate.

Q: Would you say that the U.N. Foundation is the current model for public-private partnerships in development?

CALVIN: Well, I'd like to say we're a good model. We've been at it for 12 years. And during that time, I would say a lot of public-private partnerships have been developed by us and by others.

It's been gratifying to see the U.S. government make such a major commitment to public-private partnerships. And the U.N. itself has become much more partner-friendly. Twelve years ago, the only notion of a partner for the U.N. was a member-state government. And today, there are many agencies that are very effective at working with all kinds of partners.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about your partnership with Vodafone and the mHealth initiative?

CALVIN: This is a five-year-old partnership that started with a big commitment from Vodafone to support some of the work we were doing around health and, specifically, an initiative to eliminate measles around the world.

Over time, we began to explore not just using Vodafone's financial resources but also their technology skills. After a two-year evaluation with the World Health Organization [WHO] and the World Food Program, we came up with two areas in which their programs might be improved with better use of technology. One was in emergency response. The World Food Program and the U.N. Foundation have partnered with Vodafone to do a much better job

of providing emergency communications response capacity, which was most recently demonstrated in Haiti.

The other area was in data collection around health issues. When health workers were going out on vaccination campaigns or were tracking outbreaks of diseases or tracking stock-outs of commodities, such as condoms, they would typically write it down on a piece of paper and send it someplace. And maybe three months later, it would be noted.

And now, they're using handheld devices; in some cases, cellular phones. Even in the poorest of regions, mobile phones are prevalent. So that turned out to be a really tremendous leap for WHO and other health workers.

That led us to realize that there many obstacles to broad-scale adoption of mobile technology for a broad array of health uses, whether they be diagnostic or reminders about taking drugs or data collection. And so we created—with the Rockefeller Foundation, Vodafone, PEPFAR [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief] and others—the mHealth Alliance to help advocate and drive progress in this area. We believe this is very exciting, and it is taking off like crazy.

Q: One of your big advocacy areas is women and girls. Why is investing in women and girls so important in achieving the MDGs?

CALVIN: Well, if you focus on women and girls, you can probably make progress on every MDG.

About 12 years ago, one of the first innovations in our work was to urge the U.N., which has always had a tradition of excellent support for children zero to 5 and with mothers, to develop programming around adolescent

girls—a cohort that was being left out.

The more we looked at it, the more we realized that if you could get to a 12-year-old girl and keep her in school and delay marriage and delay childbirth, you could reduce poverty, not only in her family but in her community.

"It's been gratifying to see the U.S. government make such a major commitment to public-private partnerships."

So we began working with the U.N., with other partners such as the Nike Foundation and Girl Scouts, to create a coalition to get others to recognize the importance of investing in girls specifically; not just women or not just youth, but girls. Most recently, we created a campaign oriented towards adolescent girls in our country so that they can get engaged and help girls around the world. The campaign, called "Girl Up," will be launching this fall.

Q: How would you rate the U.S. plan for tackling the MDGs?

CALVIN: I think it's actually really good. It's got very specific elements, particularly as it comes out of the Global Health Initiative—and the food security proposals.

Q: How do you assess the climate of the so-called "donor fatigue" in Pakistan? Is there

anything the development community should be doing to drum up more awareness or support of Pakistan?

CALVIN: I think there's definitely some donor fatigue going on. There's also that interesting reaction that a slow-building crisis is less impactful than an instant crisis. It's much, much harder to get a sense of urgency and generosity.

I think the [U.N.] secretary-general [Ban Ki-moon] has done a good job of trying to build public awareness and support. I have been really impressed that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has made this one a priority with a large outreach and appeal effort.

What's been successful in the past is when [the secretary-general] has designated a special envoy, such as President Bush or President Clinton. And maybe that needs to happen in this case.

But I think there is a natural tendency among citizens and individuals to worry about where their aid dollars are going. And Pakistan is a very difficult country to get aid to. So I think one of the messages we need to be putting out is where the money is going, how it's being delivered, how it's being monitored, how it's being reported back.

Q: Where would you like the U.N. Foundation to be in five years?

CALVIN: Well, I hope we continue to be the U.N.'s best friend. And by that I mean helping it achieve its goals and to become an agent for strong and effective institutions. ★

MISSION OF THE MONTH



The head of Nigeria's Muslim community, Sultan of Sokoto, Sa'adu Abubakar, immunizes a child against polio.

Innovative Response

Revitalization of the Nigerian polio program has been an effort that has involved the highest levels of the Nigerian government, USAID, and other donors. Since 2008, the Nigerian government has revitalized its immunization program, giving it a higher degree of importance in its national healthcare delivery system. Efforts were also made to actively engage traditional

and religious leaders in northern Nigeria, educating them on the realities of polio and soliciting their help to dispel the untruths about the immunization program. Over time, the leaders adopted the program as their own and now vigorously promote it in their communities with each immunization cycle.

A media campaign was undertaken to help ensure that messages of support from key leaders, such as the Sultan of Sokoto, the spiritual leader of Nigeria's Muslims, were widely disseminated. The government also appointed a new head for the National Primary Health Care Development Agency who committed himself to addressing other public concerns.

USAID/Nigeria and several other donors' health programs worked to improve routine immunization and other child health services in a concerted effort to increase polio prevention and reduce the imbalance that favored prevention of other diseases. Vitamin A distribution, anti-malaria bednets, and other items were added to polio immunization campaigns to make them "Immunization Plus Days" to broaden their reach and effectiveness. New polio vaccines were introduced to improve the effectiveness of each round.

USAID worked closely with Nigerian counterparts to reinforce these efforts and revitalized the polio immunization teams by hiring "independent monitors" to conduct spot checks to quickly identify problems and improve motivation and coverage. Working outside their own communities

NIGERIA



and the polio team structure, the monitors have proven to be very effective.

Results

Due to the collaboration between the Nigerian government, USAID, and other partners, effective polio control measures have been put in place over the last five years. Data from immunization campaigns show a declining rate of parents who are refusing polio vaccination for their children and an increase in vaccination follow-up. Reports from independent monitors show increased coverage rates in most states. Data on children paralyzed by diseases other than polio show that the proportion of children in 10 states who have never been vaccinated for polio has decreased from 30 percent in 2005 to less than 10 percent in 2009.

Finally, with better case detection and tracking, minimal polio virus transmission has been recorded from late 2009 through April 2010, with only two confirmed cases in the first four months of 2010 compared to 388 in the same period of 2009. These are the lowest rates found in Nigeria since the inception of the program.

This evidence that the polio virus is yielding to improved immunization efforts is gratifying, but there still remain some states and local governments where control efforts are not adequate and the risk of another upsurge in polio is a constant threat.

The Nigerian government and its partners have scheduled a robust series of polio immunization rounds in 2010 in a further effort to increase coverage in the remaining problematic areas and to maintain hard-won gains elsewhere. For the first time, Nigeria appears to be on track to fully interrupt polio transmission, and perhaps eventually eradicate the disease. ★

INSIGHTS

FROM ADMINISTRATOR DR. RAJIV SHAH



This year, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reach the 10-year mark. In 2000, nearly 200 world leaders met at the United Nations and agreed to make dramatic global development gains by 2015, targeting eight specific objectives, including reducing poverty and hunger, and improving health and education.

While those eight goals have served to rally support for development programs worldwide, the United States has never before had a comprehensive plan for tackling these goals. Until now.

In late July, the Obama administration unveiled its strategy for achieving the MDGs. That strategy, which was crafted through an interagency process led by USAID, not only illustrates that the United States fully embraces these time-bound targets, but offers specific ways on how we plan to focus our energies and leverage our efforts to achieve them in the next five years.

The strategy is comprised of four imperatives: leveraging innovation, investing in sustainability, tracking development outcomes, and enhancing mutual accountability.

Innovation is at the heart of our efforts. We must develop and apply new technologies and approaches to address human development needs, seeking breakthroughs that can help leapfrog development problems. We must also develop new ways to deliver existing solutions to more people.

Temporary success will not achieve progress toward achieving the MDGs. Gains and advances must be deep-rooted and must be sustained. Policies and programs must be fully owned by the people they are designed to help.

The U.S. strategy also focuses on results and outcomes. Embracing the best practices in monitoring and evaluation is necessary to track whether our programs are working. Simply tracking dollars spent does little if there are no real gains.

The U.S. MDG strategy also seeks to ensure that both donors and partner nations are held accountable. We will strive to ensure aid is administered in the most effective way.

The MDG strategy signals our nation's shared commitment to the moral, economic, and strategic imperative of alleviating extreme suffering around the globe. It reflects our country's values by reasserting America's leadership in the pledge to fight global poverty. That is something for which every American can be truly proud.

This MDG strategy also embraces the Obama administration's first National Security Strategy, which recognizes the importance of helping the planet's most needy, working to alleviate poverty and inequality, and advancing peace and security.

This month, nations will reconvene at the U.N. General Assembly MDG Summit in New York to measure progress and to agree on an expedited plan of action to meet these ambitious targets. There, senior U.S. officials will officially speak to the U.S. commitment to achieving the MDGs.

For the first time, we have a serious strategy on how the U.S. government will go about tackling the most challenging development obstacles of our time. If we are to secure a prosperous and peaceful future for our children, we must limit the worst human suffering and help people around the world unlock their potential to improve their communities and societies. ★

BRIEFS

U.S. Admits Human Rights Shortcomings

WASHINGTON—The Obama administration acknowledged last month that “America’s human rights record is less than perfect,” the Associated Press reported. However, in the first U.S. report to the U.N. Human Rights Council on conditions in the country, President Barack Obama stressed that the country’s political system has built-in safeguards that promote improvements.

In the report, the State Department “noted that although the U.S. now has an African-American president and that women and Hispanics have won greater social and economic success, large segments of American society suffer from unfair policies and practices.”

The ACLU praised the administration for engaging with the council, but said the report neglected to address key areas where the United States has not met its human rights obligations, including “inhumane prison conditions, racial disparities in death penalty cases, and abuses in the immigration detention system.”

Somalia Farming Increased During Rainy Season, UN Says

NAIROBI, Kenya—A U.N. agency said strong rains have cut the number of hungry people in Somalia by 25 percent, but that an estimated 2 million in the Horn of Africa country still need food aid, the Associated Press reported.

Bloomberg News reported that the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, considered one of the world’s worst, eased after above average seasonal rains fell between April and June.

“Now, about 27 percent of Somalis need aid, compared with 42 percent at the end of 2009,” the United Nations said in an e-mailed statement. The U.N. cited a report by the Food Security Nutrition Analysis Unit

and the USAID-funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network.

The AP went on to report that the gains Somalia has seen the last six months could be reversed if rainfall runs short.

UN Denounces Rapes by Rwandan Rebels

GOMA, Democratic Republic of Congo—According to the United Nations, a mob of Rwandan rebels gang-raped at least 179 women during a weekend raid on a community of villages in eastern Congo in late August, reported the *New York Times*.

The raided villages were near the mining center of Walikale, known to be a rebel stronghold, and are “very insecure,” according to a spokeswoman for the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. According to humanitarian officials, “this attack was unusual because of the large number of victims and the fact that they were raped by more than one attacker simultaneously.”

Bloomberg News later reported U.S. and Russian diplomats as saying that communications lapses between U.N. troops and villages in eastern Congo delayed the response to the rapes.

15 Percent of Haitians Remain Homeless

An estimated 1.3 million Haitians, or 15 percent of the population, “are still living in tents or under leaky tarps,” following the Jan. 12 earthquake, the *Washington Post* reported last month, even though “foreign governments and charities have pledged billions of dollars for relief and reconstruction.” The homeless “are scattered in more than a thousand fetid camps.”

Meanwhile, access to health care has improved much since the earthquake, due to “the influx of doctors, nurses and medicine from international aid organizations,” some officials say. And USAID funding “gives 20,000 people a day the wherewithal to feed their families.”

Israel-Palestine to Resume Peace Talks

WASHINGTON—President Barack Obama began hosting direct peace negotiations between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Washington Sept. 2, marking the first face-to-face negotiations between the sides in two years.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton formally reopened the negotiations days earlier, saying she thinks a deal could be reached within a year. The announcement marked a small victory for Obama, who had pledged to address the conflict early in his term but faces a daunting challenge in pulling off an agreement.

Middle East envoy George J. Mitchell, who has been conducting shuttle diplomacy between the antagonists for months, called on both sides to “refrain from taking any steps that are not conducive to making progress.”

Gaza Unemployment Reaches 40 Percent

The unemployment rate in Gaza is 40 percent, and opinion is divided among Gaza City residents on who is to blame.

“Many people interviewed at random...blamed Hamas rather than Israel for the lack of jobs and freedoms. Others supported Hamas and said Israel is at fault,” reported *USA Today*. The newspaper noted that the blockade enforced by Israel and Egypt “has seized large caches of weapons bound for Gaza,” but “it has also kept out some construction materials, such as concrete,” which Israel says “would be used to make bombproof bunkers.”

African Nations at High Risk for Food Shortages

Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania are listed as at high risk for food shortages on Maplecroft’s Food Security Risk Index 2010, reported Kenya’s *Daily Nation*. The index also indicated that “sub-Saharan Africa is particularly vulnerable to food insecurity because of the frequency of extreme weather events, high rates of poverty, and failing infrastructures, which decrease production and distribution capacity.”

From news reports and other sources. ★

Future Economists Study in US

By Rachel Bahn

Hajra Zafar is committed to making a difference in her home country of Pakistan as the first woman to receive a master’s degree in economics under USAID’s Women’s Leadership Training in Economics (WLTIE) program.

In May, she completed an accelerated, one-year master’s degree program in economics from Boston University, describing the experience of studying in the United States as “one of the greatest opportunities of my life.”

Managed by the Economic Growth Office, part of the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade, WLTIE is currently helping 19 scholars

from seven countries—Angola, Ecuador, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Vietnam—pursue master’s degrees in economics and development at U.S. universities. Eight scholars were selected from Pakistan alone—the largest number from any participating country.

The WLTIE program was established to enhance leadership and economic opportunities for women from developing countries. In many parts of the world, economic policy-making is largely dominated by men. With too few seats at the tables where economic decisions are made, women are often unable

see **ECONOMISTS** on page 10 ►

FRONTLINES: SEPTEMBERS PAST

1970: In his foreign aid message to Congress, President Richard Nixon asked for a revitalized foreign assistance program to help other countries raise their standards of living. His message, which was printed in its entirety in the Sept. 24 edition of *FrontLines*, included six proposed reforms. The president said that foreign aid was “not a burden, but an opportunity to help others to fulfill their aspirations for justice, dignity, and a better life.”

1980: The Agency receives the Helen Keller International Award for its work in preventing blindness and providing services for the visually handicapped, reported the Sept. 25 *FrontLines*. In receiving the award, USAID was noted for its programs in Haiti and Indonesia to prevent eye disease caused by vitamin A deficiency as well as expanding services for the blind in the Philippines. Also noted were the Agency’s programs in seven West African countries to combat river blindness, and eye disease treatment programs in Turkey, Guatemala, Israel, Korea, and Lebanon.

1990: The September *FrontLines* reports on a recent six-member delegation from the Soviet Union that met in Washington, D.C., with officials of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance to discuss U.S.-Soviet cooperation for preparation and relief of disasters. The five-day meeting sprang from a 1988 earthquake in Armenia, after which the United States provided \$1.9 million in emergency assistance. Other agencies participating in the meeting included the U.S. Federal Emergency Response Agency and the departments of State and Defense.

2000: Since the end of the Cold War, most conflicts have taken place in countries where the economy relied most heavily on agriculture, according to a study by the International Peace Research Institute. “Most of the political instability that led to violent conflict in these countries has sprung from economic concerns, rather than ideological differences,” reported the August/September *FrontLines*. As a result, agricultural research is a crucial element in strengthening the economy and stability of developing countries, concludes the study. ★

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS



Photo by Sue Eitel, USAID

USAID has increased its support for disability-related activities in Haiti.

Haitians Cope with Disabilities, Before and After Quake

By Sue Eitel

Today, most people see Haiti as a land full of rubble, toppled buildings, and destroyed homes. Extensive news coverage following the Jan. 12 earthquake focused on the massive loss of life, the serious injuries, and the humanitarian response to the disaster.

Since the earthquake, USAID has designated \$10 million to support disability-related activities in Haiti. But even before the quake, Haiti had as many as

800,000 people with disabilities. As in other countries, the causes of disability are varied. The World Health Organization estimates that 7 percent to 10 percent of a given population has some type of disability.

In 2007, three years before the earthquake, USAID provided \$1.2 million for a project to protect the human rights of vulnerable populations, including people

see **HAITI** on page 10 ►

Experts Say Prize Money Can Spur Development Innovation

By Steven Gale

Will rural clinics in Uganda get microscopes to diagnose diseases? Will Colombian farmers charge cell phones using scrap metal solar collectors?

Will Vietnamese amputees in remote villages get low-cost prosthetics that require little maintenance? Or will physicians examine pregnant Sudanese women with stethoscopes as small as a cell phone but as powerful as a hospital-based ultrasound?

These innovations can move quickly from labs to the field, sometimes in a matter of weeks or months, if the development community uses prizes and challenges to spur innovation, said experts at a USAID and White House-sponsored science and technology conference in July. At the "Transforming Development" conference, 60 of the world's leading scientists gathered for two days to explore how modern knowledge and innovation tools can be used to address longstanding development challenges. (All conference materials, including transcripts and videos of keynote speeches are available on the Agency's intranet at <http://inside.usaid.gov/EGAT/sti>).

Prior to the conference, USAID's new Science and Technology Office received nearly 650 proposals for "grand development challenges" to be tackled through a new emphasis on science and innovation. The proposals came from Agency technical offices, bureaus, missions, and science advisers as well as 150 conference attendees and the general public.

The challenges discussed at the conference

see **PRIZE** on page 11 ►

Democracy Triumphs with Somaliland's Second Peaceful Election

This summer, Somaliland's presidential election marked a rare, peaceful democratic transition in the greater Horn of Africa.

On June 26, the lead opposition Kulmiye party (Kulmiye means "bringing together") received almost half of the more than 538,000 votes cast, while the ruling UDUB party (United People's Democratic Party) won 33 percent of votes. Another opposition party, UCID (the Justice and Welfare party), received 17 percent of the votes.

With the election, Kulmiye party leader and veteran politician Ahmed Silanyo was declared the new president of Somaliland,

with then-President Dahir Kahin Riyale issuing a statement assuring the people of Somaliland that he would respect the election outcome.

More than 500,000 Somalilanders cast their ballots. Some voters waited in line to vote at least five hours before polls opened.

USAID contributed over \$700,000 to support the Somaliland presidential election process.

Eight hundred domestic observers monitored the process throughout Somaliland's six regions. Political party watchers, trained by USAID implementing

see **SOMALILAND** on page 11 ►



Photo by IRI

A poll worker dips a man's finger in ink to indicate he has cast a vote during June elections in Somaliland.

SCIENCE from page 1

solution to improve the health, livelihoods, and educational opportunities for some of the poorest people on the globe. On Sept. 22, before invited guests, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah is expected to talk about STI's potential and to encourage that products move quickly from the concept stage to the lab stage, and then to the field.

"STI is the cornerstone of the new USAID," said Alex Dehgan, USAID's science and technology adviser and director of the Office of Science and Technology. "The U.N. General Assembly event will help demonstrate the Agency's commitment to become a leader in development through the use of science and technology.

"The philosophy behind this strategy is that science and technology writ large is the most powerful way to leapfrog development and get away from the idea that we must re-create the last 200 years of development."

The U.N. event follows a Washington STI event co-hosted by USAID and the White House earlier this summer, and more details about the U.S. strategy to use science in international development are expected. The event is also set to showcase some of the ways STI is making inroads in the developing world now—or will be in the near future—with an interactive science fair that shows off "design for the other 90 percent," or

innovations that help the economies of the poorest countries (see August *FrontLines*, page 16). Contributors include institutions like Design Revolution from Palo Alto, Calif., and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Development Lab.

"The science fair was an essential part of the plan," Dehgan said. "USAID wanted to break the mold, so to speak, and show, rather than just talk about, these exceptional innovations and the brilliant minds and talents that developed them. Having a fun, interactive event was an added bonus."

USAID is providing financial backing to the 20 or more "science experiments" that will be

on display—\$100 laptops, water purification devices, low-pressure irrigation pumps, and the like—all aimed at saving lives or increasing incomes of people in poor countries.

"We are trying to build economies for the future, not economies for the past, through solutions that are scalable and sustainable," Dehgan said.

In addition to Shah, other speakers at the STI event are Dr. Quarraisha Abdool Karim, the principal investigator of the CAPRISA 04 HIV microbicide trial, and Ellis Rubenstein, the president of the New York Academy of Science—the organization that runs Scientists Without Borders. ★

MIDDLE EAST

Palestinian Women Take on Stereotypes by Taking the Field

BETHLEHEM—Honey Thalgiyeh raised a few eyebrows when she started playing soccer in 2004. Her neighbors, family, friends, and school teachers criticized her choice. Thalgiyeh was told by everyone that soccer is a man's game, but she persisted because she believed that she was exercising her rights—and she loved the game.

In March 2008, USAID funded soccer training for Palestinian girls in the Bethlehem area in the West Bank. It was part of an effort to promote gender equality and advancement of Palestinian girls and women like Thalgiyeh.

Rif'at Turk, a renowned coach and local soccer legend, offered advice to girls' soccer clubs in three communities. Already a talented player, Thalgiyeh assisted Turk and occasionally served as a trainer. Today, two years later, she says that the experience motivated her to become a soccer player.

"I received moral support that women's soccer is legitimate, and learned that conflict between nations has no place in this game," she said.

Thalgiyeh has faced many challenges but has also celebrated many accomplishments. Today, she is the captain of the Palestinian National Soccer Team for Women and has represented the Palestinian territories in Jordan, Egypt, Malaysia, France, Germany, Syria, and Lebanon. Thalgiyeh says that the fans are surprised when they see the Palestinian women's team, because it reflects an image of Palestinian society they are not accustomed to.

For Thalgiyeh and her team, success has a price tag. "There are no women's bathrooms or locker rooms," explains Thalgiyeh. "And our families are worried and keep saying that we have no future in soccer."

Still, gradually the public is becoming more receptive to women playing the world's most popular sport. In fact, the women have created a ripple effect in Palestinian society, and currently at least 15 clubs in the West Bank—even in rural areas—have women's soccer teams for girls aged 8 to 14.

Thalgiyeh is proud to see young girls realize their dream and develop a love for the game. "This is progress despite the challenge we face. We are succeeding, and the Palestinian Authority began offering us support," she says.

As Thalgiyeh reflects upon her experiences during the last few years, she says: "Female soccer players are goodwill ambassadors, changing society and breaking the cycle of marginalization." ★



Honey Thalgiyeh stands with (from left to right) Jibril Rajoub, president of the Palestinian Soccer Federation; Joseph Blatter, president of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association; and Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority, at the first women's soccer tournament in the Palestinian territories in October 2009.

ASIA

Dreams Expand for Mongolian Woman with Disabilities

MANDALGOBI, Mongolia

—As a child, Gantuya Bazarsuren dreamed of becoming a gymnast. But at age 13, while descending a flight of stairs carrying a container with water, she fell, injuring her legs so badly that she could no longer walk unaided. She was able to graduate from high school only with the help of her parents and teachers, who carried her to and from school and classes.

In the Central Gobi town of Mandalgobi, where Gantuya lives—and throughout much of Mongolia—negative perceptions of the disabled often prevent them from getting an education and joining the workforce.

There are 115,000 registered people with disabilities (PWDs) in Mongolia, according to the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor. However, no general education schools, colleges, universities, or technical/vocational or training centers are accessible for PWDs in Mongolia. Currently, 146 teacher-training colleges and universities do not have standards for disability training or how to work with children with a disability.



Gantuya Bazarsuren

After many years of practice, Gantuya mastered the use of crutches, but she remained isolated, alone, and mostly homebound.

In 2009, things began to change. She discovered programs that are part of USAID's Fostering an Inclusive Environment for Local Disabled (FIELD) Project, implemented by Mercy Corps. She began participating in trainings about NGOs, business-plan development, and disabled people's rights.

Since its inception in January 2009, the FIELD project has trained over 2,650 disabled people in Mongolia. In December of that year, project leaders advocated successfully for approval of "National Standards for Accessible Construction and Walkways" by Mongolia's State Department of Measurement and Standardization. As a result of the campaign, 23 accessible ramps already have been built by government and private sector agencies at their own cost, and several agencies have also modified their facilities to accommodate the needs of PWDs.

The FIELD trainings increased Gantuya's understanding of her situation and her potential. But much more important to her was the regular contact with other

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AFRICA

Sudan's Youth Build a Better Future, One Brick at a Time

By Adam O'Brien and Jennifer Shaw

AKOBO, Sudan—Situated at the fulcrum of a remote and volatile conflict corridor, the young people who live in Sudan's Akobo County have been the focus of recent efforts by USAID to bolster community security in the run-up to southern Sudan's referendum on self-determination slated for January 2011.

For many youth in Jonglei state, where Akobo is located, Sudan's precarious peace has been slow to yield security or development. With few opportunities emerging since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement



Youth received training to rehabilitate the Akobo County headquarters office building.

was signed in 2005, a large class of disaffected and disempowered youth has turned to cattle raiding for money. And they are being drawn into conflict over natural

resources with neighboring communities—a trend made worse by the ready supply of small

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LATIN AMERICA



John Carter, founder of Aliança da Terra, center, awards a basic training certificate to a member of the Xavante fire brigade.

Brazil's Indigenous Fire Brigade Completes Training

By Adam Kubiske

MARAIWATSEDE RESERVE, Brazil

When forest fires break out deep in the Amazon, state fire brigades often lack capacity to handle the growing numbers of blazes. Now, the Xavante indigenous group from the Maraiwatse Reserve in Xingu, Brazil, has the skills needed to be the first responders should a fire become threatening.

On Aug. 6, 23 members of the community graduated from a firefighting training program, co-sponsored by USAID and the U.S. Forest Service, and implemented by the NGO Aliança da Terra. Representatives from the Mato Grosso state fire department were also part of the training team. The graduation ceremony marked the fire brigade's completion of training in basic-level prevention and firefighting techniques.

The training program included field exercises and courses on fire behavior, suppression techniques, fire safety, and risk management.

The Xingu region has seen a rise of devastating fires due to changes in climate brought about through deforestation. Fires are used by some farmers and ranchers to clear forested areas, which has made the region drier and hotter overall, and has increased the risk of blazes spreading out of control.

Xavante villagers who hunt in these forests are now

experiencing a food crisis and have witnessed increased child mortality due to the lack of sustenance, according to John Carter, founder of Aliança da Terra.

While providing firefighting training to the Xavante indigenous group in the Maraiwatse, Aliança da Terra is also creating new norms for responsible farming in the Amazon—discouraging outdated farming and ranching methods that often require fire in order to clear the land.

"The producers of the region have no one to ask for help in case of fires, especially criminal fires. That's why Aliança da Terra decided to create a fire brigade of our own, and, thanks to the training provided by the U.S. Forest Service and to the equipment donated, we can now control the fires that are common during the winter," Carter said.

This is the second indigenous fire brigade to form in the Xingu region. The firefighters are considered a vital link in thwarting this type of destruction. They will often be able to reach a fire quicker than the Mato Grosso state fire department, which lacks capacity to handle the increasing number of fires, especially those that begin deep in the Amazon.

The first fire brigade to form—the Kayapó fire brigade

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EUROPE & EURASIA

Business Advisers Help Ideas Find Funds in Macedonia

SKOPJE, Macedonia

Last year, business owner Alexander Markovic and his partners identified a need: locally made boxes for transporting produce grown in Macedonia.

The solution was to expand his paper mill company, Hartija Ko, into the cardboard box business.

But there were concerns: Hartija Ko officials were weary of pursuing the venture. Production had already been halted at the factory for almost a year to install new machinery for corrugated cardboard production, and Markovic and the others were not sure they wanted to enter the market for specialized shipping cartons.

"We needed a consultant to better understand the business we'd gotten into. We needed an honest assessment of the market and what we could do, not just some fanciful ideas," said Kiril Ivanov, one of the partners.

They turned to an adviser from the Financial Platform, part of the USAID/Macedonia Competitiveness Project, for help. The project assists Macedonian companies to expand market linkages, build a competitive workforce, and attract foreign direct investment.

The Financial Platform works with local service providers to help client companies improve financial management and planning; develop sound business expansion plans and financial proposals; and find a mix of

financial instruments that best meet a company's needs.

"The assessment our adviser came up with was very honest. We even made the most pessimistic forecasts. But it still looked positive. And although the plan we came up with did not help us to get a loan—because the banks here did not have enough free money to invest so much at this time—the plan succeeded in attracting a new partner," said Ivanov.

Their new partner, a Croatian company that is one of the biggest fresh fruit and vegetable suppliers in the Balkans, is investing \$1 million in Hartija Ko to buy new machinery that can produce the specialized produce boxes.

In Macedonia, as in other emerging markets, lack of access to finance needed for upgrading facilities, working capital, or product development is an obstacle to growth and job creation. And with an unemployment rate estimated at 33 percent, job creation is of critical importance to the country. The challenge is even greater these days as credit conditions are tight.

But the Competitiveness Project has shown that good projects will find money, even in rough times. In the last quarter, Financial Platform advisers helped 15 local companies obtain \$5.32 million out of a total of \$8.17 million in new financing. Beneficiaries include companies with as few as three

to as many as 100 employees in agriculture, agro-processing, and light manufacturing.

This financing is expected to create 158 new jobs and result in exports of over \$1.6 million. Since its launch in early 2009, the Financial Platform has helped 70 companies in Macedonia to access different financial instruments and invest over \$30 million in their businesses. In fact, financial institutions have started referring customers to the Financial Platform advisers.

In addition to creating jobs and allowing the individual companies to grow, these investments support the development of important economic sectors in Macedonia. If good quality shipping cartons are produced locally, they will be more affordable for Macedonian farmers. Using these cartons will increase farmers' sale prices because they improve the quality of produce.

Hartija Ko is not only expanding its production line. The owners previously converted the mill to run on natural gas instead of crude oil, but are now finalizing a deal with an Italian company to further convert it to use biomass for generating thermal and electric energy.

"The guidance from our adviser gave us a better understanding of the complexity of the investment project we were initiating. We are working to position ourselves as leaders in this industry," said Markovic. ★



Workers at Hartija Ko produce cardboard shipping cartons.

FOCUS ON PANAMA



USAID and the Peace Corps participated in the eco-lodge inauguration.

INDIGENOUS GROUP PROTECTS PANAMA CANAL

By Shawn Stokes

ELLA DRUA, Panama—“Water is life’s matter and matrix, mother and medium. There is no life without water.”

What Nobel Prize winning biochemist Albert Azent-Gyorgyi put so well has been the central motivator behind a USAID-sponsored environmental project aimed at preserving the Panama Canal Watershed, which wrapped up this summer. This watershed not only ensures the well-being and smooth operation of the Panama Canal, but also provides the water supply for half of the country’s population.

As part of its long-term activity in this watershed, USAID/Panama administered several small grants designed to benefit the area, and watched as several small communities used their grants in innovative ways.

The community of Ella Drua, home to an indigenous

group called the Emberá-Wounnan, was one of several in the area that received a grant. Community members used it to support an eco/ethno-tourism project that provides an alternative to slash-and-burn agriculture and other activities that harm the watershed.

“Before, the community really didn’t have many sources of income other than small agriculture,” Emberá regional leader Carlos Gil explained in Spanish, a language he speaks in addition to his mother tongue, Emberá. “Now we can care for our local environment and at the same time provide a sustainable future for our children.”

USAID funds were used to build much of the infrastructure necessary to accommodate tourists, including safe hiking trails, sleeping accommodations,

restroom facilities, and running water via a new aqueduct. The result is a comfortable and accessible environment for tourists, yet one that still maintains the traditional lifestyle and integrity of the Emberá-Wounnan people.

Visitors to Ella Drua are welcomed at the river’s edge and then led to a giant thatched roof pavilion. Here, they learn the history and culture of the people, and are treated to traditional music and dances. Later, they will hike to a local waterfall. On the way, they will see many of the plants that contribute to the local diet, serve as medicine, and are used to make colorful dyes for traditional Emberá artwork.

Tourists who come to the community learn they are supporting activities that preserve



Ella Drua recently finished an eco-lodge for overnight visitors.

both the culture of the Emberá-Wounnan, as well as the environment in which they live.

And the number of these tourists is growing. In 2008, the community was host to just over 300 visitors. The following year, this number more than doubled to over 600. So far, 2010 is poised to be the busiest yet.

A Community Destined for Success

The idea to attract visitors to Ella Drua began as early as 2000.

However, it was not until 2006 that community members formed an official committee to lead the venture.

In 2007, regional leader Carlos Gil started collaborating with other community leaders in the area. Around the same time, sisters Elsa and Isabel Carpio Chami began selling some of the community’s traditional hand-made artisanal goods at local markets. They were making a profit, but the market charged them \$70 a day to rent space.

FOCUS ON PANAMA



Isabel Carpio Chami and the new generation of Embera-Wounaan



The community welcomes visitors with colorful dresses and hibiscus flowers.

Photo by Fernando Alvarez, USAID

Photo by Eliana Sanzola, USAID

"I finally asked myself, 'Why am I bringing our goods to a market a half-hour outside the community?'" Elsa said. "We should bring the people here to see them."

Events seemed to be unfolding auspiciously for Ella Drua. Unbeknownst to the community, USAID had begun an assessment on ecotourism in the Panama Canal Watershed. Soon after, Ella Drua was identified as one of two communities to host an ecotourism project. In August 2008, the Agency awarded the community a small grant.

While USAID/Panama led the project, it also coordinated with other U.S. agencies to help develop the community. In October 2008, Peace Corps volunteer Alyssa Eagan moved to Ella Drua. She has lived and worked there for two years, teaching fundamentals of grassroots economic development.

And in May 2009, seamen aboard the USNS Comfort learned of the project in Ella Drua. Over the course of a week, groups of 20 came from the ship every day to help build the aqueduct and two new docks that tourists now use to access the community.

"There is just something special about this community," USAID project management specialist, Rita Spadafora, said. "It was as though every person who came in contact with them just wanted to help out in some way."

Perhaps it was the way in which the community took ownership of the project that touched visitors. It demonstrated a remarkable level of collaboration. In one project to install a network of walking trails, community members carried four dump-truck loads of rocks over a kilometer of dry riverbed using only buckets and wheelbarrows.

"Everyone helped," Isabel said, gesturing to the group of young children playing in the distance. "We even made small buckets for the children to use so they, too, could help carry the rocks."

Youth Embrace Culture

Critics of promoting ecotourism in indigenous communities often assert that such projects alter or destroy the culture. While there may be examples of this in other parts of the world, this is not the case in Ella Drua. In fact, it appears that the opposite is true.

As Panama becomes more developed, there is increased pressure on indigenous adolescents to adopt western characteristics. Community members describe how before the project took off, many youth started being embarrassed to wear traditional attire. They also started to lose interest in learning traditional music and dances. But this project seems to be reversing that.

"Now that they see people coming from all over the world to see their culture, and paying money to do so, that has changed," said Isabel. "Now they are proud."

Isabel has also changed. One of the project's most visible impacts is how it empowered the women in the community. Isabel is now the lead coordinator of the tourism committee.

"It is amazing to see how much Isabel has grown," Alyssa Eagan said. "At first she was very timid, but after nearly two years, she has transformed into a very confident woman. She's become a very important leader in the community."

But perhaps the greatest long-term success of this project will be reflected in some of USAID's other initiatives. Although this

Emberá-Wounnan community lives in the Panama Canal Watershed, the majority of their people live in the Darién region that borders Colombia. Many youth in these marginalized communities have little access to education or work. For this reason, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has found it very easy to entice them into trafficking narcotics through the region.

Gil and Isabel are planning to share their experiences with other Emberá-Wounnan communities in the Darién region in hopes of replicating the sustainable tourism project. If they are successful, many youth in the Darién will have viable alternatives to drug trafficking.

Only the Beginning

The USAID-sponsored project officially ended in July with the traditional inauguration of the *Torroarande*, an enormous open-air thatched roof platform on stilts that will serve as an eco-lodge for visitors. However, community members understand that the end of this project means they must stay focused on the future.

Representatives from the community continue to meet with hotels and tourism operators in the capital, bringing them new brochures and reminding them of the packages available to tourists.

They have begun to tap into the cruise lines that come to port in Colon in order to attract day trippers interested in learning about Panama's indigenous groups, and some community members are enrolling in English classes to improve accessibility to non-Spanish speakers. They have also developed a user-friendly website for travelers who wish to plan their own trips at www.elladruaembera.com/index.html.

It seems as though the recent success has created a momentum within the community.

"Yes, we are an indigenous people. A traditional people," Gil said at the inauguration of the *Torroarande*. "But that does not mean that we are incapable of having fresh and open minds.... This is not the end, but rather, it is only the beginning." ★

CONTINUED...

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arms and the local government's limited capacity to enforce the rule of law.

USAID's program here is providing training and employment opportunities for youth to deter them from cattle raiding and other activities that involve violence. It is also helping to expand the presence of local authorities who can help prevent or defuse conflict, as well as bolstering civil society organizations so they can make a positive, peaceful contribution to help Sudan develop.

Rehabilitating the county headquarters in Akobo is the cornerstone of these activities. In January, 52 youth received training to make compressed-soil blocks, which are used for building construction. Many of the participants—from the Lou Nuer and Jikany Nuer ethnic groups—trekked from remote cattle camps that are often the epicenters of deadly conflict. Working together, they made 14,000 blocks in just over two weeks. Some of the youth were then employed to rehabilitate the dilapidated Akobo County headquarters office building using the blocks.

Standing in a freshly dug hole that equaled his lanky height, trainee Gabriel Gatluak stretches out his mud-covered arms, lifts his face toward the sky, and wearily smiles ear to ear.

"I am so happy to be working and contributing something to my community that will last a long time," Gatluak says. "We are really digging deep into our soil and building peace in Akobo now."

The county headquarters project addresses two key conflict triggers in southern Sudan—disempowered youth who often have limited access to education and economic opportunities, and ready access to small arms; and local government that has the commitment but not the capacity to deliver services and security across a sparsely populated and sprawling landscape.

Until the county headquarters building was rehabilitated this year, Akobo County authorities had to operate out of an 80-year-old colonial relic that lacked reliable power and basic furniture.

USAID is currently helping the youth form a for-profit business association to begin additional projects to develop this severely poor area, including the

construction of a center that is currently underway for "traditional authorities," a term that includes chiefs, elders, and local judges who play an important role in peacebuilding efforts.

USAID's support has coincided with a decrease in violence and tension throughout Akobo. Despite April's national elections, and competition over scarce dry-season resources after a particularly bad rainy season, Akobo County Commissioner Goi Jooyul Yol noted initial signs of success.

"Last year, there were over 900 deaths in Akobo County due to ethnic violence, and so far this year there have been 10 deaths," Goi said. "The security situation has vastly improved, and USAID's work with youth, traditional authorities, local [NGOs], and local government has been a major factor in creating a more stable environment."

Although these initial results appear promising, extending and reinforcing this positive momentum will be critical for long-term stability.

During a recent visit to Akobo, Ken Spear, the head of USAID's transition and conflict mitigation programming in Sudan, said: "We've cut a small path to walk through a dense forest, which has created much excitement and brought other actors to the task. But it will take even greater effort and resources to ensure that the forest doesn't reclaim the path, and to construct a proper road in the coming months." ★

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ple with disabilities.

This initiative created the Secretariat of State for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities (SEIPH) under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Work to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities and inclusive programming. USAID also gave equipment—crutches, canes, and wheelchairs—to SEIPH, and helped create a manual to catalog the equipment and develop a software program to track its use.

Another USAID-funded project, initiated in spring 2009, provided additional support for SEIPH, which helped to enact legislation to protect the rights of people with disabilities, and has helped establish a permanent bank of durable medical equipment for

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to influence policies that impact their livelihoods.

The program helps to expand women's technical skills and personal leadership abilities through coursework, internships, conferences, and networking. Upon receiving a degree, each scholar must return to her home country where she is expected to pursue a career in economic policy-making and public service through the government or an NGO.

Zafar's participation in WLTIE was somewhat unexpected. After receiving her bachelor's degree in Pakistan, she decided to pursue an advanced degree. She applied and was admitted to Boston University, but high tuition costs prevented her from attending.

Then Zafar saw an ad in her local newspaper for WLTIE. She submitted her application and was quickly accepted. Within two months, she was on her way to Boston.

Zafar said her favorite graduate course was Development Strategies.

"Coming from a developing country, I have observed various economic and social issues that plagued Pakistan and wondered about their causes and solutions," she said. "The course provided me with a clear perspective and understanding of why some countries lag behind in development, what constrains them, and what strategies can be most useful and effective to pull them out of the vicious circle of underdevelopment and poverty."



Hajra Zafar (fourth from left, bottom row) and her fellow scholars toured Washington, D.C., during orientation for an economics program for women.

Zafar considers herself very fortunate to be selected for the program. When asked what advice she would give to future scholars, she said: "They need to realize that this is a big responsibility, as a large amount of investment has been made by the U.S. government in providing them with this opportunity. Upon their return, they must be prepared to devote all their efforts to try to make a difference in their countries."

WLTIE scholars from other countries have similar aspirations.

Gunjan Dhakal, a banker from Nepal, is studying international and rural policy at Oregon

State University and plans to use her education to work with organizations in Nepal that help rural populations to improve their living standards.

Hoa Le Thi Phuong, who also has a strong background in banking and finance, is one of six scholars studying at Brandeis University. She hopes to participate in advancing reforms in Vietnam upon returning to her former employer, the country's Central Bank.

Zafar is now back in Pakistan, applying for jobs with various NGOs, research centers, and universities. ★

Haitians with disabilities. Project efforts led to Haiti's signing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as its signing of the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities. The project also helped write a law on the integration of people with disabilities and lobbied for its passage. The lower house of the Haitian parliament approved the law in May 2010; SEIPH is lobbying for passage by the upper house.

Access to buildings and information was also a challenge before the earthquake. Haiti lacks standards for building construction to provide ease of access for people with mobility

challenges. Communication strategies for deaf individuals or those with visual impairments are rarely used. And both before and after the quake, people with disabilities faced substantial stigma.

Since the earthquake, USAID has stepped up its support of disability-related activities in Haiti, and plans to hire a disability adviser to work within the Haiti mission.

"Now more than ever, Haiti is a challenging environment for people with disabilities, who face both physical and social barriers," said Lloyd Feinberg of USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance. "The Haitian government needs support to enact laws and services

for people with disabilities. Advocacy and educational efforts should inform both the government and the public on the rights and needs of people with disabilities."

He added that those living with disabilities prior to the earthquake, as well as countless individuals more recently disabled, require rehabilitation services.

"People with spinal cord injuries need better care, as well as long-term solutions for independent living. Service providers need training. Services and opportunities for children and adults with mental challenges and developmental disabilities also must be considered," said Feinberg. ★

PRIZE from page 5

included electrifying a million schools, hospitals, and villages by 2015; doubling the household income of 100 million farming families by 2020; and helping indigenous people monitor and decide land use issues.

Technological solutions already exist for some of the challenges posed, but they are not widely used, conference speakers said. For other development challenges, new products and innovation will be necessary.

Contests have led to new concepts, new approaches, and even new industries in the past. For example, Charles Lindberg's historic solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927 led to a fast-growing aviation technology and industry boom. Few know that Frenchman Raymond Orteig offered \$25,000 in 1919 for the first nonstop aircraft flight between New York and Paris. That prize captured Lindberg's imagination and energies.

Still, incentive schemes like prizes and awards are not widely used in government procurement or international development. But that is changing quickly. The current administration is moving swiftly to advance innovation with prizes and awards for solving tough problems domestically and internationally.

Prizes and challenges are also seen as ways to foster transparency and more open government.

The Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA) has been using prizes and awards to explore cutting-edge ideas from high technology to human interactions.

Last year, DARPA announced an open challenge to learn how today's information technology hurdles could be addressed using the latest social networking tools. DARPA placed 10 red weather balloons at undisclosed locations across the United States and asked "contestants" to find their exact locations. A top prize of \$40,000 would go to whoever found the balloons in the shortest time. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab—one of 4,200 entrants—came in first, finding the balloons in under 10 hours using Facebook, Twitter, and a home-grown university-based website.

The DARPA Red Balloon Challenge was designed to explore basic research issues involving exponentially increasing social networking techniques.

Such information-sharing techniques are now being examined to support rescue efforts during natural and man-made disasters; early warning systems to curb the spread of pandemics or uncharted weather calamities; and national recalls of unsafe products and tainted foods, including the recent salmonella outbreak from tainted eggs.

Like DARPA, NASA has used prizes to achieve tough goals. But the granddaddy of awards falls to the non-profit X-Prize Foundation, which offered \$10 million in 2004 for the first private company to launch a reusable three-person spacecraft to fly 100 kilometers above the earth's surface within two weeks. Estimates suggest the pursuit of the X-Prize alone—which was won by the firm Scaled Composites, famed aerospace designer Burt Rutan, and financier Paul Allen—has generated more than \$100 million in new investment.

For USAID, public prizes and awards can be used to pinpoint specific development challenges, bump up private sector investment, bring in new organizations through the Internet, and, generally, allow the Agency to reach out to greater numbers of problem solvers. If done right, these competitive incentive schemes can promote greater collaboration and bring increased public attention to vital development issues. ★

BRAZIL from page 7

— reported an 80 percent reduction in fires in their area since becoming active one year ago.

The Xavante people, together with Aliança da Terra, USAID's office in Brazil, and the U.S. Forest Service, are now working towards establishing a permanent training facility to conduct regular training exercises and firefighting techniques.

As part of the initiative, the Mato Grosso state fire department donated security equipment for the Xavante fire brigade—tools that should prove invaluable to protecting the region. ★

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people and with the public, which gave her confidence and made her daily life more and more pleasant. She says that her participation in the trainings was helpful because she finally understood: "I can do something to improve my own situation."

Gantuya did not go to university because she thought she would not be accepted by the other students. She now regrets that difficult decision.

"When I was a kid, I had many dreams, but I forgot about them while I spent so many years at my home. Now I've started remembering my dreams again and I want to be a writer," said Gantuya.

A few months after the FIELD project started, Gantuya began to reintegrate into the local community. After completing a computer skills training



Gantuya Bazarsuren at work in her new office

course, she began working for a Mongolian NGO. She now earns an income and heads a disabled peoples' group in Mandalgobi where participants are trained and exchange information.

It is a dream come true for Gantuya, who now says, "I'm no longer afraid to walk down the road anymore." ★

This article was written by Alex Sacharov of Mercy Corps.

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partner, the International Republican Institute, were deployed to most of the 1,782 polling stations, observing election day processes and ballot counting. Many poll workers were university students as local universities partnered with Somaliland's National Electoral Commission to train students to administer the polls per Somaliland's election law.

Somaliland unilaterally declared independence from Somalia in 1991. The autonomous breakaway area in north-west Somalia is not recognized internationally, although it held its first peaceful presidential election in 2002. After postponing the most recent election for almost two years, election watchers say that Somaliland has enhanced its democratic reputation by pulling off a second peaceful presidential vote. ★

FRONTLINES

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"I realize that there are among us those who are weary of sustaining this continual effort to help other nations. But I would ask them to look at a map and recognize that many of those whom we help live on the 'front lines' of the long twilight struggle for freedom—that others are new nations posed between order and chaos—and the rest are older nations now undergoing a turbulent transition of new expectations. Our efforts to help them help themselves, to demonstrate and to strengthen the vitality of free institutions, are small in cost compared to our military outlays for the defense of freedom."

—John F. Kennedy, Special Message to the Congress on Foreign Aid, March 13, 1962

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Administrator Rajiv Shah, left, walks with retired Gen. Nadeem Ahmed, chairman of the Pakistan National Disaster Management Authority, and army officers during a visit to a flooded area of the Swat Valley Aug. 24.



A Pakistani man holds a baby as a flood victim wades through water in Sujawal, southern Sindh province, Aug. 30.

most recent damage. Malaria is also a concern because of the large volume of standing pools of water leftover from the flooding, ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes that carry the disease.

"The number-one concern is the spread of waterborne illness," USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah told PBS NewsHour in late August. "[S]o the United States Agency for International Development has worked with the government of Pakistan to create a disease early warning system."

The system will help "pin-point and identify some of the early cholera cases, and then dispatch medical teams to provide support and treatment to children who have diarrhea and to those communities to make sure we're preventing the spread of disease," Shah said.

In addition, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced that cell phone messaging service Humari Awaz has been mobilized to provide updates on the flooding as well as grant and business opportunities related to flood recovery. Since its launch in October, the network's subscribers collectively have sent over 350 million text messages. And the system is available for new announcements in support of flooding and other national priorities.

USAID's U.N. partners have spent millions in U.S. funding on the humanitarian response. The World Food Program provided almost 1.9 million flood-affected beneficiaries with more than 22,300 metric tons of food, and UNICEF provided 4.2 million packets of oral rehydration salts and 2.1 million zinc doses to

Aiding Pakistan Flood Victims

The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed; reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred quickly; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure donations are culturally appropriate.

- ▶ **USAID:** www.usaid.gov/pakistanflooding
- ▶ **Center for International Disaster Information:** www.cidi.org (advice on the most effective ways to support disaster relief efforts)
- ▶ **ReliefWeb:** www.reliefweb.int (information on relief activities by the humanitarian community)
- ▶ **Pakistan Relief Fund:** www.state.gov/pakistanrelief/index.htm (created by the State Department as a mechanism for the public to contribute money to the ongoing efforts in Pakistan)
- ▶ **InterAction:** www.interaction.org (a list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for flood response efforts in Pakistan).

female health workers conducting community-based management of diarrhea for children. In addition, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees provided 20,000 tents, 78,000 plastic tarpaulins, 105,000 blankets, 75,500 sleeping mats, 43,000 jerry cans, 36,000 plastic buckets, 23,000 kitchen sets, 26 metric tons of soap, and 42,000 mosquito nets to approximately 335,000 flood victims.

Moreover, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance has set up a rapid response fund known as Responding to Pakistan's Internally Displaced, or RAPID. So far, more than \$1 million in grants has been awarded in response to 100 submissions to the fund, which is processing

about 10 applications per day.

"While we continue to work through international partners, one of our goals is to help improve capacity among local organizations through the RAPID fund," Pakistan Office Director Bob Wilson said. "How these organizations manage the small grants they receive will help determine their ability to participate in our longer-term recovery and reconstruction activities."

To date, flooding has killed more than 1,600 people, mostly in the early days, washed away 1.2 million homes, desecrated crops, killed thousands of livestock, and wiped out every bridge in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, among other destroyed infrastructure. ★

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and other humanitarian commodities from USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the Administrator observed the USAID-supported World Food Program distributing meals and partner NGOs providing water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

He also inspected communities inundated by the rising waters, met with donors, and consoled flood victims, including women and children who told him they had "lost everything," but were getting enough to eat. Shah responded that the American people wanted to help rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

"I have been deeply moved by the things I have seen and heard along the banks of the Indus about the impact that these floods have had on the people of Pakistan," Shah said.

The mighty river, he said, has nurtured civilization for five millennia, yet wrought an unprecedented humanitarian, economic, and social catastrophe, submerging one-fifth of the country and affecting more than 20 million people. At least 1,600 people have died, most immediately after torrential rains began to fall in late July.

Despite the logistical challenges to providing assistance, the Administrator said he is confident that the international response—in collaboration with the Pakistani government—will succeed in keeping displaced populations fed and disease-free.

"We are committed to supporting as significant a relief effort as is possible, and [our] day-to-day focus is to ensure that the relief effort exists at greater scale, is more efficient, and is able to meet greater needs every single day," Shah said before delivering this message from the American people to the people of Pakistan: "The United States stands with you. We will look for ways to most

quickly and effectively help you rebuild."

Beyond meeting basic needs in the immediate relief period, recovery will focus on local markets—helping people get back on their feet, supporting local cash-for-work programs—so that Pakistanis can support themselves and build viable local economies.

"As hard as it is to imagine a future in the face of the devastation that we see today, we believe that this also presents an opportunity to build back a stronger, better, and more resilient Pakistan," Shah said.

During the visit, Shah met with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari and Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, as well as key officials from the United Nations and NGOs. He also met with retired Gen. Nadeem Ahmed, whose National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is leading the Pakistani government's relief efforts. The two noted the cruel irony of a population displaced by conflict and resettled by NDMA with OFDA assistance in 2009, now displaced again by a natural disaster.

After touring the ravaged Swat Valley—where not a single bridge remains intact but where thousands of stranded villagers have been evacuated to safety from the once scenic region—Shah said that NDMA is doing "an outstanding job in very difficult circumstances."

The Administrator also assembled key USAID/Pakistan senior staff to strategize about the way forward once the floods recede.

"As I look around me, it is obvious that Pakistan faces the biggest challenge in its 63-year history," Shah said in a post on the USAID Impact Blog. "One thing is clear, though, which is that the United States intends to show itself as a friend and committed partner of Pakistan for many years to come." ★
— Z.T.